

New York Times

Mr. Obama and Mr. Medvedev

By the time President George W. Bush left office, Russian-American relations had deteriorated alarmingly. Russia bore a good part of the blame, harassing opponents, stifling a free press and bullying its neighbors. But Mr. Bush both enabled former President Vladimir Putin's worst impulses and ignored his occasionally legitimate complaints.

The Washington Post

Iraq: Mission not yet accomplished

Today is the deadline by which U.S. troops are to withdraw from major Iraqi cities. This clear line in the sand must provide some relief to many Americans, whose sacrifice has been extraordinary. But as the United States shifts its attention from Iraq to Afghanistan and other issues of grave importance, none of us can be lulled into believing that Iraq is a "mission accomplished." That sense of security is simply false. June 30 is not an historical endpoint to be celebrated by political philosophers; it is the beginning of a highly uncertain chapter in Iraqi democracy and self-governance.

On the offensive

As U.S. Marines launched a major offensive in Afghanistan's Taliban-infested Helmand province yesterday, one problem was already apparent: There are not enough troops to properly carry out the Pentagon's new counterinsurgency strategy. The force is "a little light," Marine Brig. Gen. Lawrence D. Nicholson, its commander, told national security adviser James L. Jones in a meeting reported by The Post's Bob Woodward. "We don't have enough force to go everywhere."

The Guardian

Defensive errors

When an official at the MoD makes a duff call, the system ensures that no one takes the blame

The soldiers give all, while the politicians starve them of cash

There's no heroism to be found in "The Young British Soldier", Kipling's poem written after the

Afghan war of the 1880s: simply acknowledgement of the country's mythic savagery and resilience, which must prompt us to ask again if the sacrifices being made by British infantry in Helmand, most recently by Lieutenant Colonel Rupert Thorneloe and Trooper Joshua Hammond, have any more lasting purpose than the conflicts of Empire? Other questions follow. Will the American surge of 10,000 troops master the province we have struggled to subdue? Is there an overall workable strategy in place? And can we afford the cost of the war and the lives lost?

We've lost sight of our goal in Afghanistan

The problem with conflict is that the way we describe it does not necessarily conform to reality. We think in terms more appropriate to a bygone era: by the desire to seize, destroy or conquer. The present war in Afghanistan is a case in point. We have been encouraged to believe that with the application of sufficient military force, backed by some state building, victory can be achieved and the country can be transformed into a modern democratic state after our own ideals.

Afghanistan: Operation Hope in Hell

The most optimistic assessment of the war in Afghanistan is a sober one. Nearly eight years of fighting have taken the can-do shine off serving commanders. Can't do, or don't have enough troops to do, is more often the message - and even General Jim Dutton, the deputy commander of Nato forces, admitted last week that the Taliban had fought British troops to a stalemate in Helmand.

As soldiers die, the MoD is stockpiling for the cold war

Generals are always teased for preparing for the last war but one. They laugh. Not us, they say. Then they go out and prepare for the last war but one. Now they are preparing for the cold war. Yesterday's defence report from the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) was significant not for what it said but for who said it.

Foreign Affairs

The Pentagon's Wasting Assets

The military foundations of U.S. dominance are eroding, thanks to the spread of advanced military technologies to rising powers, hostile states, and nonstate actors. In response, Washington should pursue new sources of military advantage and a more modest grand strategy.

The Telegraph

Afghanistan 'surge' will test Obama's military muscle

It's the moment we've all been waiting for: the launch of the "surge" against the Taliban in

Afghanistan. And to judge by the enormous firepower Nato commanders have deployed for Operation Khanjar, or "sword strike", this time the Americans mean business.

Cutting Britain's defence budget to pay other bills is a false economy

A free people, George Washington said, must be constantly awake against the insidious wiles of foreign influence. At any moment, from any quarter, trouble may pounce to put the sovereignty of the nation under threat. Defending the realm demands eternal vigilance.

Boston Review

Cyber-Scare: The exaggerated fears over digital warfare

The age of cyber-warfare has arrived. That, at any rate, is the message we are now hearing from a broad range of journalists, policy analysts, and government officials. Introducing a comprehensive White House report on cyber-security released at the end of May, President Obama called cyber-security "one of the most serious economic and national security challenges we face as a nation." His words echo a flurry of gloomy think-tank reports.